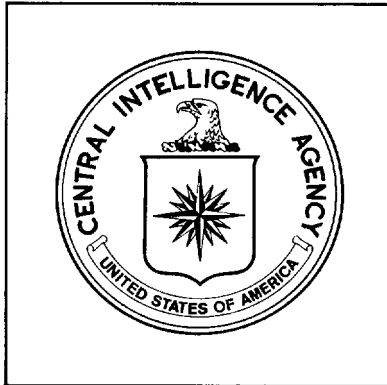


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140

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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

C O N T E N T S

Lebanon: Libyan Meddling	1
Iran: General Elections	3

June 19, 1975

SECRET

SECRET

Lebanon

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Libyan Meddling

25X6 [REDACTED] Libya transferred more than \$35 million into Lebanon during May, and that the funds continue to arrive at a rate of approximately \$1 million per day. This is far in excess of Libya's normal commercial or diplomatic needs.

Libya uses these funds to support a variety of leftist, Muslim, and radical fedayeen organizations in Lebanon. These primarily urban groups were responsible for much of the sniping that made it difficult to end the civil disturbances in Beirut in April and May and in Sidon last February.

President Qadhafi's long range plan is to destroy Lebanon's system of power-sharing between Christians and Muslims, which has worked in practice to ensure Christian dominance of the government and army. Qadhafi would prefer a radical Muslim government that would abandon Lebanon's policy of co-existence with Israel and provide active support for the fedayeen.

25X1C [REDACTED] the Libyan leader is working to arrange a coup in Lebanon to bring about these changes. Although the groups he supports are not themselves strong enough to mount a coup, they do have the financial and military resources to intensify any fighting between Lebanese security forces and the major fedayeen groups. In an extreme situation, such fighting could lead to civil war and to the destruction of the traditional political system.

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June 19, 1975

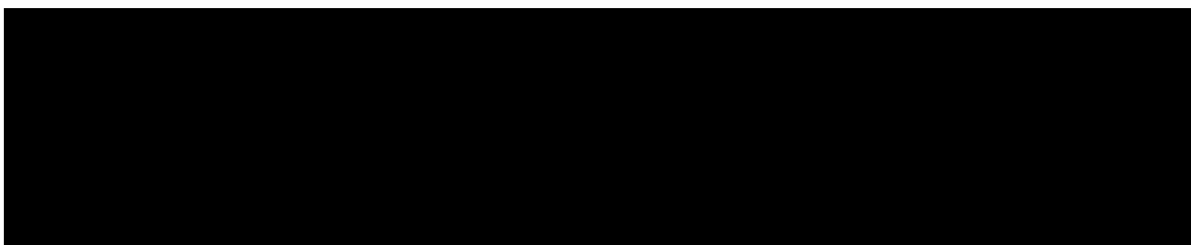
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Tripoli is also promoting its aims by peaceful means. The Libyan embassy in Beirut--like many others--buys news coverage favorable to Libya's radical policies; it has bought outright at least four Beirut newspapers.

25X1C The Lebanese government is aware of these activities, and has taken limited steps to counter Libya's influence. Authorities are trying to close down two Libyan-owned newspapers for allegedly slandering Egyptian President Sadat, and have arrested and plan to deport several dozen Libyan and Libyan-backed extremists.



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June 19, 1975

2

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Iran*General Elections*

Iran is holding today its first parliamentary election since the Shah did away last March with the quasi-competitive multi-party system. The only party on the ballot is the Resurgence Party, created by fiat of the Shah. Iranian officials and press are nevertheless touting the event as an important exercise in political democracy and a milestone in Iran's political modernization.

The government has gone to great lengths to overcome the apathy and cynicism with which most Iranians view elections but it is unlikely that it has changed their view that elections are irrelevant to the exercise of political power. Tehran has stressed the importance of a big turnout. About 4.5 million Iranians out of 11 million eligible voters have registered to vote following an intensive enrollment drive that included government pressure exerted through employers.

An average of three candidates are competing for each of the 298 parliamentary seats. This and pledges of official neutrality are cited by the government as proof that voters will have a meaningful choice. One Tehran paper noted that this competition means that, although all candidates approve the same platform, the voters are free to choose who will represent them.

The candidates' list was the result of an elaborate screening process. Local committees throughout Iran reviewed applications and forwarded comments on a reported 6,700 individuals to the executive board of the Resurgence Party. The board reduced the number to 1000, added its own comments, and sent the list to a committee of security and police officials for review before presentation to the Shah. A final list of 841 candidates was published in late May.

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June 19, 1975

3

SECRET

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Nearly one-half the members of the current legislature were not included on the final list; so far, however, no meaningful patterns can be discerned to help account for the changes other than Tehran's apparent wish to introduce new individuals. There has been a predictable amount of grumbling from those not renominated, including charges of bribery against some who made it to the candidates' list.

Although the government claimed to be encouraging aggressive debate of issues, the campaign was lackluster and did little to stimulate Iranian voters. Most important questions were excluded from consideration. The government-controlled press pointedly noted that little debate was likely on foreign, oil, and defense policies because such issues are normally "outside the framework of political debate."

The constitution, the monarchy, and the Shah's domestic reform package had already been put off limits by his warning last March that their acceptance was a prerequisite for joining the new mass party. Debate on social welfare, housing, and port congestion was encouraged.

There is a potential for scattered incidents of terrorist-inspired violence on election day. The new Resurgence Party has been a propaganda target of the People's Strugglers, a conservative, religious-oriented terrorist group. The city of Qom, a religious center, has been the scene of anti-government demonstrations in recent weeks. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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June 19, 1975

4

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